

### IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the following claims.

1. (currently amended) A method for forming hardened interconnects comprising:  
depositing a metal layer comprising copper and an additional metal species  
comprising beryllium over a semiconductor wafer surface wherein said copper and said  
additional metal species comprising beryllium are co-deposited; and  
after co-depositing said metal layer comprising said copper and said additional  
species comprising beryllium, performing chemical-mechanical polishing of said deposited  
metal layer comprising copper and an additional metal species comprising beryllium wherein  
said additional metal species hardens said deposited metal layer to reduce the rate of said  
polishing.
2. (cancelled)
3. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein ~~said additional metal species is  
beryllium.~~ depositing the metal layer comprising copper and the additional metal species  
comprising beryllium comprises depositing the metal layer and the additional metal species  
over an at least one opening in an insulating layer formed over the semiconductor wafer  
surface.
4. (currently amended) The method of claim 3, wherein the additional metal species  
comprising beryllium forms a solid solution in ~~said~~ the deposited metal layer.

5. (currently amended) A method for forming hardened interconnects comprising:
- depositing a metal film over a semiconductor wafer surface;
  - introducing an additional metal species comprising beryllium to the metal film;
  - heating the deposited metal film with the introduced metal species;
  - allowing the ~~heated~~ metal film to cool, so as to form precipitates of ~~said~~ the introduced metal species; and
- after allowing said heated metal film to cool performing chemical-mechanical polishing wherein ~~said~~ the additional metal precipitate hardens said deposited metal film to reduce the rate of said polishing.
6. (previously presented) The method of claim 5, wherein the deposited metal film is copper.

7 - 21 (cancelled)